

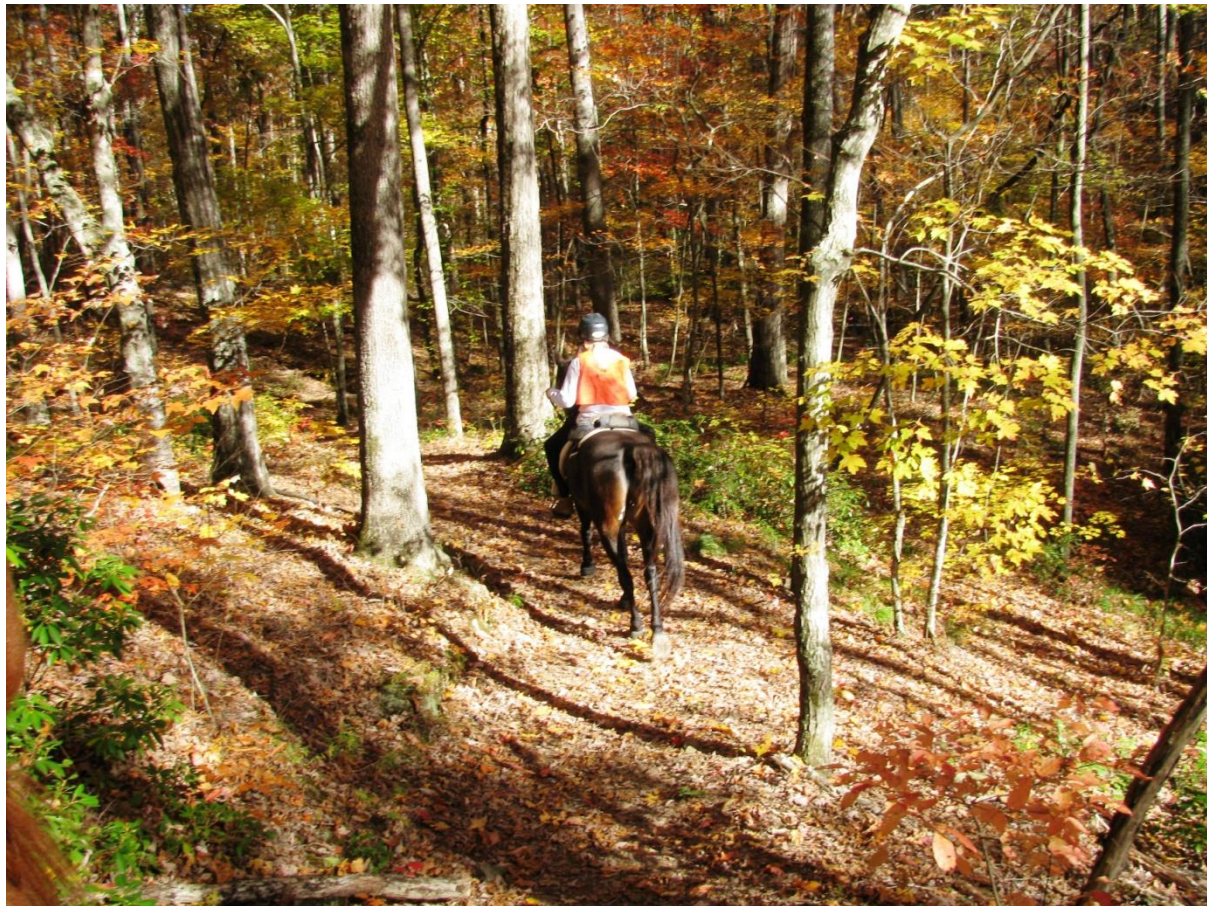
Trail Talk

Conasauga Ranger District

October 2011 – January 2012



"There are no words that can tell the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its charm."
Theodore Roosevelt



Cindy Bell, Dry Creek Working Weekend



October 2011- right out of the gate, our infamous trail maintenance duo of **Troy and Wanda Brown** began the month on Horseshoe Bend Trail cutting out blow downs for the entire length of the trail...**Steve Clayton and Jim McGarvey** came out to the Dry Creek area to do some much needed mowing and bush hogging...a few days later, BCHNWG members **Cindy Bell, Kimi Gregg, and Larry Wheat** jumped on their horses to do some trail loving care on the Dry Creek trail system...**Mark Voykovic** went on his monthly jaunt to Beech Bottom and Jacks River Falls to clean up the area and spread the Leave No Trace ethics and also stopped by the Cottonwood Patch Campground to pick up trash...EMBA member, **Andrew Gates**, spent a couple of days this month cleaning out water bars and cutting brush on Bear Creek and Pinhoti Trails...**Amos Burrell** kept up his credentials by giving of his time to attend the fall fire refresher at the ranger station...**Fred Pilcher** keeps on going on the west side of the district, painting the overlook deck and picking up trash on John's Mtn. as well as trash pickup at Dry Creek...five members of BMTA, **David Dusenbery, Jim Holland, Dennis McClure, Brian Rice, and Larry Rice** came out on various times throughout the month to do trail maintenance on sections G and M of the Benton MacKaye Trail...**Troy and Wanda Brown** as well as **Jim Leatherwood** were out on Rice Camp Trail crosscutting blow downs and trimming brush alongside the trail paying particular attention to the "disaster area" of the trail...**Amos Burrell** came out in support of the district's prescribed fire program by carrying a drip torch and laying fire in a section of the Forest in the John's Mtn. area...The always dependable **Wanda Brown** keeps everything going in the tracking of volunteer names, hours, and trail projects...TEAM Conasauga came through with a respectable **142.25 hours** of volunteer service! Way to go guys, your service is much appreciated!!!

November 2011 – EMBA member, **Justin Hurd**, cleared downfall on section 2 of the Pinhoti Trail...a couple of days later, SORBA member, **Gennie Dasinger** did some trail clearing on section 3 of the Pinhoti Trail...**Jim Holland and Linda Pringle** took to the Benton MacKaye Trail to crosscut blow downs from Watson Gap to Jacks River...wilderness trail enthusiasts, **Troy and Wanda Brown** performed a recon mission on the Rough Ridge Trail from Three Forks Trailhead to Beech Bottom and reported several trees down across the trail...**Andrew Gates** who represents EMBA, spent several days this month cleaning out water bars and cutting trees off the Bear Creek Trail and Pinhoti Trail sections 1,2,3...**Tim Woody**, the district's Lake Conasauga camp host, helped FS employee Alan Orth shut down the campground for the season...a big whopping turnout for November's Working Weekend #62, Larry Thomas' last official outing with our esteemed volunteers, at the Dry Creek Trail System was a huge success...those that came out to trim trails with loppers and brush cutters on the Loblolly and Mount Joy Trails and say their goodbyes to LT were **Doug Allen, Susan Boyle, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, Wesley Crowe, Amy Findley, Gene Findley, John Franetic, Susan Franklin, Geri Geren, Jim Leatherwood, Matt Lloyd, Kathie Owens, David Smith, Nicole Warren-Miller, Larry Wheat, Jim Bishop, Tannis Blackwell, Tom Blackwell, Steve Clayton, W.T. Comerford, Charlie Crider, Jim Cullen, Kimi Gregg, Bill Hester, Jeff Krivo, Carlos Martel, Gail Milner, Tom Owens, Anna Scoggins, Bill Semsrott, David Tanner, Mike Tedder, and Larry Vanden Bosch**...needing to improve the mountain biking experience and the erosion problems on Bear Creek Trail, **Bill Hester** joined FS employee Ed Lang to run the Ditch Witch Trail Machine maintaining and building drain dips...none other than **Troy and Wanda Brown** to round off the month with a three day excursion in the Cohutta Wilderness to crosscut blow downs on Rough Ridge, Jacks River and Beech Bottoms Trails...a tremendous **478 hours** were logged onto the books from the best volunteers around!!! Your efforts are sure showing off out there on our trails, TEAM Conasauga!!! Thank you!

December 2011 – EMBA members, **Todd Lyons and Jonathan Kohlbus**, spent several hours doing trail work on the popular mountain biking trail Bear Creek cutting back limbs and briars...**Carlos and Carol Martel** of BCHNG went to Jacks River Fields CG to check up on things and picked up trash, making sure everything looked good...SORBA members, **Conrad Fernandez and Rick Moon**, did some recon and removed some blow downs off the Pinhoti Trail in the Dug Gap and England Springs sections...four hardy Conasauga District trail volunteers, **Troy and Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, and Jim Leatherwood**, took off for the Rough Ridge Trail toting their crosscut saws and using them to clear away any blow downs they saw...**Bill Hamrick and Carolyn Hamrick**, members of BMTA, performed trail work on section 8h of the Benton MacKaye Trail removing and cutting vegetation along the entire section with loppers as well as cutting and carrying away small blow downs...our Beech Bottom/Jack's River Falls patrol volunteer, **Mark Voykovic**, did his usual monthly policing looking for violations, talking with folks about LNT and making sure the area was clean...**Troy and Wanda Brown** were in for a long, hard day at Tearbritches Trail removing blow downs on the entire trail...EMBA member, **Andrew Gates**, took time to maintain water bars and cut trees on Bear Creek Trail and nearby sections of the Pinhoti Trail...**Carol and Carlos Martel** are becoming a major part of the new Forest Service Co-Trails Initiative and dedicated some time to that program this month...taking time to finish up the entire length of Rough Ridge Trail from where they left off to clear more blow down were **Troy and Wanda Brown, Jim Leatherwood and Jim Bishop** ...our west side volunteer, **Fred Pilcher**, came out to pick up garbage at recreation sites and alongside forest roads at John's Mtn Overlook, Keown Falls, Pilcher Pond, and Dry Creek...one more time before the holidays set in, **Troy and Wanda Brown** trotted down Hickory Creek Trail to the river to finish up the entire length of trail from those pesky blow downs...and finally, thanks **Wanda Brown** for your continued dedication and support of managing the volunteer database...a fantastic effort of **199.25 hours** were donated to the cause of giving back! Keep up the great work you do out there. Kudos to TEAM Conasauga!!!

January 2012 – making sure the west side of the district is looking in tip-top-shape and free from garbage lying around, **Fred Pilcher** contributed several days this month to recreation and general forest areas....five different members of SORBA devoted their time to trail maintenance on different sections of the Pinhoti Trail...**Matt Smith** worked on removing downed trees in the Dry Creek area...**Rick Moon** spent several days on the trail in the England Springs and Redwine Cove areas cutting trees off trail and overall general maintenance...**Mitchell Hayes** cleared out blow downs and picked up garbage from the Dug Gap and England Springs sections... **Barry Gilley** used his trusty hand saw in the Dug Gap area to cut out blow downs...**Marcus Moore** went to Middle Mountain to get rid of any trees laying across the trail...BCHNWG member, **Larry Wheat**, rode and worked on the Loblolly and Dry Creek Trails of the Dry Creek trail system to clear deadfall...a three day Forest Service Co-Trails Conference held at Unicoi State Park was attended by a large contingent of members of BCHNG...those in attendance were **Carlos Martel, Carol Martel, Debbie Crowe, Jim McGarvey, Joy Corcoran, Kathleen Corcoran, Martha Fillingham, Melinda Towe, Susan Shedd, Paul Saunders, Misty Callihan, Dewey Campbell, and Molly Ford**...and finally, to end a quiet volunteer month, EMBA members, **Kevin Reese and Rob Palmeri**, accomplished trail maintenance by eliminating any downed trees and branches across Bear Creek Trail...those that came out gave a noteworthy **183.75 hours** to support the district!!! Thanks to our volunteers who are the very best around!!!



Thank You US Forest Service and CDTVs

By Larry Wheat

The Conasauga Ranger District (CRD) held another 'working weekend', number 62 I think, and this time it was on the west side of the FS district, at the new Dry Creek Trail System. Dry Creek is a wonderful multi-loop 26+ mile shared use trail system tied into the regional Pinhoti Trail, located six miles south of Villanow, GA. While most of the trails are in fully forested hardwoods or evergreens, there are a few miles of trail in a section of the forest that has few trees due to beetle damage and perhaps fires in the past. In this relatively open section, weeds and young brush grow fast, and this work event was focused on trimming such vegetation to keep the trail clear.



Larry Thomas has served as the CRD team leader for trails and wilderness for many years. He recently accepted a promotion and will be working in the Forest Supervisor's Office in Gainesville. Managing this Dry Creek event was perhaps the last major trail maintenance activity he will coordinate for the district. In the adjacent photo he is shown welcoming the 15 volunteers and CRD personnel who worked on the trails on Friday, Nov. 18th. There were about 30 volunteers who came out on Saturday, the 19th to help. All volunteers are considered members of the

Conasauga District Trail Volunteers (CDTV), a non-profit organization established to support the trails within the district. Volunteers are from equestrians, bicyclists, hikers, and probably others who enjoy the outdoors.

Friday most of the team cleared about 1.7 miles of the Dry Creek trail, yellow, #237, southward from FS 226A to the junction with the orange trail. Additionally, Ed Lang and Larry Wheat operated the Ditch Witch trail machine to create a 20 yard trail realignment to avoid a wet spot. They also



graded ruts in 100 yards of trail #245, removed a fallen tree on trail #238, and experimented with weed and brush removal using the trail machine. Twelve hardy souls enjoyed a night of camping.

Since it was cold, the evening campfire was enjoyed by all.





Saturday morning Larry Thomas greeted about 20 additional volunteers so we had a workforce of around 30 for the day. Saturday was devoted to brush and weed clearing along the entire 3.3 miles of the Mount Joy trail, orange, #236. Volunteers also cleared perhaps another 0.5 miles of the Loblolly trail, green, #238. The photo shows trail #237 after clearing. Looks pretty good!

The after-work celebration has become popular for CDTV volunteers. Several volunteers brought food. The menu included hot chili, hot dogs, grapes, homemade cheese sandwiches, yummy coconut and chocolate chip homemade squares, packages of cookies, and other items. The volunteers, lead by CDTV officers, presented Larry Thomas some gifts of appreciation. Wanda and Troy Brown assembled a montage of waterfall photos as a reminder of the good times many shared in the District. Wanda also prepared a fantastic book



of photos and accompanying narrative that covered many years of trail work events and interesting happenings. These were presented to Larry along with a humorous letter recommending him to his boss in the new job.



In summary, it was a great trail maintenance event. Members of the Back Country Horsemen of Northwest Georgia, the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association centered in Dalton, and Team Conasauga hikers all worked alongside Ryan Farr, Larry Thomas, Ed Lang and other Forest Service personnel to accomplish improvements needed on this excellent new trail system. Thank you to all, and we hope you come back and enjoy the many miles of trail.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

- **March 17**
Penitentiary Branch---drain dips and water bars. Equestrians needed.
- **April 14**
East Cowpen---drain dips and water bars.
- **May 11-12**
Beech Bottom/Rice Camp---drain dips and water bars. Equestrians needed. Camping at Cottonwood Patch Campground.
- **June 2**
National Trails Day! Dry Creek Multi-Use Trail system maintenance needs. Equestrians needed.
- **July 14**
East Cowpen Trail---sling blading.

If you are interested, please contact Ed at 706-695-6736 x 118 or e-mail elang@fs.fed.us

Note: In addition to these scheduled workdays, we are trying to find some volunteers who are interested in working independently or with a small group to tackle smaller projects.



Monday, November 28, 2011



Dear volunteer friends, past and present:

This is my last day on the Conasauga Ranger District. Moving this week to Gainesville, GA, then starting my new position as the Forests' Developed Recreation Program Manager next Monday, 12/5. My email address will remain the same. My Gainesville office number will be 770-297-3030. Feel free to contact me either way.

As I look back on what Team Conasauga has accomplished over the past 21 years, I am filled with pride for being a part of a highly successful, grass roots volunteer program. But, more than that, I feel a sincere sense of appreciation and gratitude for your commitment, your passion and your dedication all these many years. Team Conasauga has always been about getting things done on the ground. As a result, I would stack up the condition of our trails with any others across the region and the nation. I fondly remember our motto: **"where the difficult is done immediately, and the impossible takes a little longer."**

I have no doubt that Team Conasauga will continue to do what it has always done, recognize the task at hand and get it done. Always remember that the work you do is vitally important. Keep it going, folks.



Larry Thomas

